



Anthony Stansfeld
Police & Crime Commissioner
for Thames Valley

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Dear Home Secretary,

THAMES VALLEY RESPONSE TO HMIC

Please find enclosed my response to HMIC's report on '*Policing in Austerity: Rising to the Challenge*'.

Yours sincerely

Anthony Stansfeld
Police & Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley

Home Secretary
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF



Policing in Austerity: Rising to the Challenge

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Background

HMIC's Valuing the Police Programme has tracked how forces planned to make 20% savings in the four years between March 2011 and March 2015 and published findings in July 2011 and June 2012. The latest report reviewed the position as Force's entered the third year of the spending review period. The national report was informed by individual reports on each Force in England and Wales.

The Inspection focused on three questions:

1. What is the financial challenge, and how are forces responding to it?
2. What is the impact of the changes that forces are making, both on the workforce, and on the service they provide to the public?
3. How are forces managing current and future risks?

The comparative data for England and Wales showed the following in relation to TVP:

- While the national figure shows a five percent fall in the number of police officers in the front line, four forces – Surrey, Thames Valley, the Metropolitan Police Service and Hampshire - are planning to maintain or increase their numbers.
- Thames Valley has the second largest reduction in recorded crime excluding fraud between 2010/2011 and 2012/2013.
- In terms of savings as a proportion of 2010/11 gross revenue expenditure, TVP was the seventh lowest
- In terms of the proportion of planned savings from non-pay budgets over the spending review period TVP was eighth highest
- In terms of planned workforce reductions between March 2010 and March 2015 by force (as of March 2013, TVP was sixth lowest
- TVP is one of only six Forces who have planned increases to the total workforce in frontline roles between March 2010 and March 2015.



In terms of the specific inspection report relating to TVP:

The Executive Summary states: “Thames Valley Police faces a smaller savings requirement compared to other forces, but this is not without its challenge. The force has lower costs than many other forces, meaning it has had to work hard to identify more efficiencies in order to squeeze its costs down even further.

Thames Valley Police has made a very strong response to meeting its financial challenge over the last two years. It has limited the impact of the cuts on its frontline workforce in a way very few other forces have been able to achieve; protecting its crime fighting capability by driving out efficiencies in other areas. It is one of only four forces in England and Wales where the number of police officers in frontline roles is planned to increase.

In addition, the force has demonstrated excellent performance in reducing crime over the spending review period.

HMIC is confident that the force will be able to deliver its planned savings within this spending review by reducing costs while continuing to fight crime successfully.”

The Conclusion states: “The force plans to achieve its savings with significantly fewer reductions in its workforce (both police officer and staff) than most other forces. At the same time it has continued to have a strong focus on service delivery and crime, achieving higher levels of satisfaction and greater reductions in crime than most other forces.

The decisive action that the force has taken over the last two years to bear down on its non pay costs, protect its frontline workforce and reduce crime is impressive.

The force has demonstrated one of the strongest responses to the funding challenge that HMIC has seen in England and Wales.”

PCC Response

This is an encouraging and positive report and I am pleased that HMIC has recognised the excellent progress that Thames Valley Police has made in meeting its financial challenge whilst, at the same time, improving operational performance and increasing the number of police officers allocated to frontline duties. This has not been an easy task and the Chief Constable, her fellow chief officers, and all other police officers and police staff working for Thames Valley Police deserve immense credit for the structured and professional way they have approached this difficult task.



The Force has implemented a comprehensive change programme, putting in place a sound and cost effective policing model, which means it is in a strong position to be able make the further savings required after March 2015 whilst, crucially, maintaining its high level of service to the public.

The Chief Constable and I have already identified other areas in which we can make further savings. Although this task is becoming increasingly difficult due to the level of savings already implemented, and the significant cuts still required by the Government's current austerity agenda, I remain confident that we will be able to protect our crime fighting capacity, whilst preserving the service we provide to the public well into the next period of funding reductions.

To view a copy of HMIC's report click here:

(National report <http://www.hmic.gov.uk/media/policing-in-austerity-rising-to-the-challenge.pdf>)

(Thames Valley report <http://www.hmic.gov.uk/publication/thames-valley-response-to-the-funding-challenge/>)